

City of Seattle Code of Ethics

Summary and Guidance

City officers or employees will demonstrate the values of **integrity** in the performance of the City's business, **accountability** to the law and to the citizens we serve, **stewardship** of the City's resources, and **independence** in the performance of our jobs. Employees will be personally responsible for the following ethical principles that flow from these values:

Integrity

Fairness: **City employees** will strive in all of their dealings with the City to conduct the City's business fairly, without any actual or apparent bias or favoritism. **SMC 4.16.020**

Retaliation: **City employees** shall be free to raise ethics issues, seek ethics advice, or report genuine ethics concerns without fear of **retaliation**. **SMC 4.20**

Accountability

Conflicts of Interest: **City employees** owe a duty to faithfully uphold the law and to be accountable to the citizens of the City. Therefore, employees will not engage in activities that are or appear to be inconsistent with conscientious performance of their City duties. **SMC 4.16.070(1); (2); (5)**

Post-Employment Activities: **City employees** should protect the public's trust in government. Therefore, employees must take care that their personal career plans after leaving City employment do not adversely affect the City's interests or create an **appearance of impropriety**. Certain restrictions apply to post-employment activities for a period of one year.
SMC 4.16.075

Stewardship

Protection and Proper Use of City Resources: **City employees** are responsible for ensuring that they use City resources efficiently. They should therefore protect and not misuse any City resource. **SMC 4.16.070(2)(b)**

Use of Official Position: **City employees** hold their official positions as a public trust in service to the citizens of Seattle. For this reason, employees must not use their official positions:

- For non-City purposes
- For personal gain to the employee
- As a way to confer special benefits, which would not otherwise be available, to any **person**

SMC 4.16.070 (2)(a), (c)

Privileged Information: **City employees** have a duty to protect sensitive City information entrusted to them. Therefore, employees will not disclose or use non-public, privileged or proprietary information belonging to the City for other than a City purpose. **SMC 4.16.070(4)**

Independence

Gifts: **City employees** must do their jobs free from inappropriate outside influences. Therefore, employees may not accept **gifts or benefits** from:

- **Persons** who do or seek to do business with the City
- **Persons** who engage in other transactions with the City
- **Persons** who receive City services they are entitled to receive as citizens

where acceptance might influence or appear to influence their independence.
SMC 4.16.070(3)

Employees may accept an item valued at \$25 or less that can be shared with co-workers.

Transparency and Disclosure: The public is entitled to know what interests held by **City employees** might influence their independence. Certain employees are required to file statements of financial interests. **SMC 4.16.080**



Ethics and Elections Commission
700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4010, Seattle, WA 98104-5051
Tel: (206) 684-8500 • Fax: (206) 684-8590
ethicsandelections@seattle.gov
www.seattle.gov/ethics/
http://inweb/ethics

Note: This overview is for guidance only; it summarizes the existing Seattle Code of Ethics and Whistleblower Codes, contained at SMC Chapters 4.16 and 4.20, respectively. To the extent this guidance is inconsistent with current legislation, SMC Chapters 4.16 and 4.20 shall control. Items appearing in blue type may be defined terms contained within Chapter 4.16.